



JOB CORPS'

R&R Field Report

Aiding in America's Recovery and Reinvesting in Our Future



ARRA E-Newsletter Volume 15

From the National Office of Job Corps

Dear Job Corps Staff,

This issue of the R&R Field Report features a look at American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)-funded organic community gardens at six Job Corps centers across the country. These gardens show how even the relatively small ARRA-funded projects will have lasting impacts on the sustainability of our centers and the health of our students and staff. Not only are students gaining hands-on training through the construction and maintenance of the gardens, but they are also learning about the environment and engaging with the local community. You can read more about the benefits of these gardens in the article below.

We also spotlight a restoration project at the Homestead Job Corps Center, allowing Masonry and Carpentry students to be heavily involved in creating a more energy-efficient building, making the project a great learning tool for green building practices.

At Job Corps, we also realize the importance of practicing conservation in our day-to-day lives. In this issue, we've included several "go green" tips for the summer months, including turning up your thermostat, installing low-flow showerheads, and shopping at your local farmers' market.

Finally, this report serves as a reminder to continue working on your ARRA-funded projects and to stress the critical requirements for completing all projects in a timely manner. Seventy percent of ARRA funding must be outlaid by September 30.

Sincerely,

Edna Primrose
National Director

Center Spotlight: Homestead Job Corps Center



A Homestead Job Corps Center student caulks a window as part of an ARRA-funded construction project.

A Better View for the Homestead Job Corps Center

The Homestead Job Corps Center has used ARRA funds to complete a major weatherization project that includes replacing or repairing windows and improving energy efficiency.

Masonry and Carpentry students used energy-efficient materials to replace a deteriorating window, caulk additional windows and doors, install insulation, and build an awning over a new window to allow rain to drain away from the building. Better insulation of the building has reduced the center's energy use and maintenance costs.

The project gave Masonry and Carpentry students the



Job Corps Gets a Green Thumb

Organic gardening, made possible with Job Corps' ARRA funds, provides valuable training and healthy food choices for Job Corps students. The individual projects allow students to put into practice the skills they learn in the classroom, and the bountiful crops from the gardens yield yet another opportunity for students to learn about healthy eating. From garden to kitchen, from rake to fork, here are some examples of organic gardening at work.

Hawaii-Maui Job Corps Center

The Hawaii-Maui Job Corps Center has an indigenous garden that students are maintaining. They have planted and harvested bananas, tapioca, sweet potatoes, taro, papayas, and other fruits and native Hawaiian vegetables for use in the center cafeteria.



Carville Job Corps Center

The Carville Job Corps Center garden includes two greenhouses and three planter boxes in which students cultivate vegetables and herbs. Several students and staff members formed the Carville Job Corps Garden Club, where students maintain the growing vegetables and learn about environmental responsibility and healthy eating.



Delaware Valley Job Corps Center

The Delaware Valley Job Corps Center used *Earth Day Every Day* ARRA funds to purchase, plant, and seed a community vegetable and herb garden on center. Carpentry and Material and Distribution Operations students built the garden, and Culinary Arts students maintain and harvest tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, collard greens, basil, dill, and other herbs and vegetables. The center has also invited the local community to enjoy the benefits of the garden by encouraging their neighbors to take home fresh crops produced by the garden.



New Orleans Job Corps Center

Although the New Orleans Job Corps Center's organic garden, which it shares with its neighbors, is not completely ARRA-funded, the rain barrels the students use on center to collect water for the garden were purchased with ARRA funds. The center also uses ARRA-funded compost stations to collect grass clippings, food scraps, and other waste to help maintain the garden. Many students were involved in the development of this project, as Construction training students built the garden and Culinary Arts students planted the herbs and vegetables that are used in the center cafeteria. The center has invited local residents to take part in the garden by offering them the opportunity to pick fruits and vegetables for themselves, which has greatly increased the center's local profile. The center has also partnered with a local elementary school to adopt a first grade class that helps with the garden on a regular basis.



[Watch the New Orleans garden project video](#)

opportunity to apply their skills in green construction. While working with bricklaying instructor Terry Devine to prepare for the project, students received extensive training in safety, cost-estimation, and problem-solving.

"The students worked on every aspect of this project, from installing the new window to constructing the awning on the building," said Devine. "They received hands-on training in green building by learning how to properly use materials and handle waste responsibly."

The Homestead Job Corps Center plans to continue weatherization projects throughout the center.

To see photos of Homestead Job Corps Center students at work, [click here](#).

**Go Green
This
Summer**



Warmer weather brings new opportunities to be environmentally friendly. Students and staff can adopt these quick and easy practices below to help keep their centers green. These tips should be shared with students as a reminder that there are many ways to conserve during their time on center and in their lives after graduation from Job Corps.

- Turn up the thermostat before leaving home.

A few degrees can make a big difference. By turning up the thermostat to at least 78 degrees when leaving your

Brunswick Job Corps Center

The Brunswick Job Corps Center is growing tomatoes, squash, peppers, okra, and corn in their center garden, which was constructed by students who are studying landscaping. The center anticipates a cost savings on food purchases, as the center plans to use the vegetables in the cafeteria and Culinary Arts program. The center also plans to contribute to the community by donating fresh vegetables from the garden to local food shelters.



Charleston Job Corps Center

The Charleston Job Corps Center in West Virginia has constructed an elevated organic garden for the center's Culinary Arts program. The 12-foot-by-12-foot garden bed, which features a variety of plants and promotes healthy eating habits, sits 18 inches above the ground. Garden elevation provides improved drainage and air exposure for plant roots, ultimately producing significantly more vegetation. Charleston's Culinary Arts students will begin cooking with the garden's vegetables and herbs next spring, helping reduce food costs on center.



More Gardening News: Q & A with Little Rock's Ruby Allen

Ruby Allen, the Associate Finance and Administrative Director at the Little Rock Job Corps Center, recently attended the Progressive Gardening Trade Association Conference in San Antonio, Texas. Below is an informal interview about her experience.



Ruby Allen

Q: What were a few things you learned at the conference?

A: I enjoyed learning about hydroponics, which is the use of water and plant nutrients to grow a plant, rather than traditional soil gardening. The water/reservoir planting system allows for gardening in small spaces, such as rooftops, and in urban areas with limited land or poor soil. Hydroponic gardening is also known to yield higher nutrient content and larger produce. I also learned about composting, and vermicomposting, which is the use of worms, or worm casting, which stimulates plant growth.

Q: What new ideas did you hear about that you would like to implement on center?

A: Students and staff at the Little Rock Job Corps Center have expressed an interest in gardening, and the tactics I learned at this conference, including hydroponics and composting, will help the students build and maintain a center garden in the future. Culinary staff and students can benefit from learning how to grow vegetables and herbs organically, as taught at the conference. I would love to invite someone with experience in hydroponic systems and organic gardening to speak to our staff and students.

Q: What speaker was particularly interesting, and what did he or she speak about?

A: Tom Szaky of TerraCycle, Inc., discussed innovative and fun ways to recycle. His

home, you can save energy and money.

- Use ceiling fans.

When the summer heat drives you indoors, switch on a ceiling fan instead of turning your thermostat down. Fans will help keep you cool, and they save energy, too.

- Take advantage of a local farmers' market or community garden.

Buying produce locally is not only a healthier choice, but an environmentally conscious choice as well. Local produce means less transportation time and fuel consumed from "farm to fork."

- Drink from a reusable water bottle.
- Conserve water.

During the hottest months of the year, it is important to watch your water usage. Save water by turning off the faucet when brushing your teeth, install low-flow showerheads, and wash full loads of clothes in cold water when doing laundry.

If you have news to share about your center and want to be featured in a center spotlight, please e-mail ojc.arra@dol.gov.

company has partnered with others to "up-cycle" products by turning household items into new products. Examples include using juice boxes as book bags and Oreo cookie bags as kites. Tom's company also partners with UPS to transport materials for recycling to collection sites. This addresses one of the most challenging aspects of recycling, which is moving the materials to a collection center.

Please send photos of students and staff to ojc.arra@dol.gov, or upload them to GreenSnap at www.greensnap.org. These photos may be featured in an upcoming e-newsletter.

Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, Job Corps is the nation's largest career technical training and education program for students ages 16 through 24. Job Corps is a U.S. Department of Labor Equal Opportunity Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TDD/TTY telephone number is (877) 889-5627.